

Practical and Economic Considerations

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PUBLIC LENDING RIGHT (PLR) is a right to receive payment in respect of the lending of books (or possibly other materials) to the public. The right, which is usually accorded by law, is most commonly thought of as being appropriate to authors, but publishers have sometimes claimed an equal interest. Lending is usually understood to mean lending for use off library premises, but use within the library need not be ruled out. The public is most often understood to mean the cross section of the population which uses public libraries, but the term might logically be applied to the group of clients served by any library, however restricted or specialized its membership. Three arguments have been put forward at different times in support of the concept of PLR.

Compensation

It has been alleged that the lending of books by libraries reduces the number of copies purchased, and hence the income which authors receive in the form of royalties. The argument is a difficult one to sustain, though there is some evidence of correlation between high book borrowing and low book sales. Against this, however, the shop window provided by a well-used public library provides a valuable stimulus to book buying, the effect of which cannot be quantified. There is little doubt, either, that the purchase of some types of material—notably first novels and some expensive specialized works—would be considerably less without the assured market which libraries provide, and many of these would therefore not be published at all if it were not for libraries.

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Natural Justice

Whatever the effect on an author's income from royalties, runs this argument, the repeated use of a copy of his work by means of borrowing from libraries ought to be acknowledged by some additional financial reward. "We are not asking for 'subsidies' on charitable grounds for indigent authors or meritorious but struggling publishers. No means test is applied to composers, authors, or music publishers who draw fees from Performing Right. We simply ask in the name of natural justice for better business terms."¹

Cullis and West have pointed out that, in strict logic, an author should be rewarded by his publisher with a lump sum payment instead of a royalty, since his work is completed before a single copy can be sold. Additional sales do not involve him in additional work. The existence of the royalty system represents a compromise, necessitated by uncertainty as to likely sales and hence the economic value of the author's work. On the other hand, it may imply a tacit acknowledgment by publishers or readers that the author is entitled to payment in relation to the satisfaction he provides for his readers: "A fee for service of this kind, already paid to composers, lies at the heart of any argument on public lending right."² Without this, many of the authors who bring pleasure and other benefits to their readers will be unable or unwilling to continue to do so because of the scant financial return.

This argument implies a notional link between lending right and copyright, though no copy of the publication is in fact made. Against this is the argument that libraries—and particularly public libraries—are provided at the expense of large numbers of people who join together to purchase a collection of books in common, instead of each buying one book and lending it around. Publishers, it may be said, should recognize their right to do this, and should reward authors by paying adequate royalties even if this does mean increasing by a small amount the price of all books sold, whether to libraries or to individuals. Cullis and West point to the operation of the secondhand book market as further evidence of the implausibility of arguing that "single" reading is a norm against which the abuse of authors by libraries can be assessed.³

Protection of Vernacular Literature

Countries which have a small population, a living language and a literary heritage, but which are now heavily dependent on the use of translations and second-language publications, may find in P.L.R. a means of assisting and encouraging native authors for whom the

limited home market might not otherwise provide an adequate income. It is no accident that the earliest examples of what has become known as PLR occurred in Denmark and Sweden precisely for this purpose.

Eligible Authors

If PLR is founded on the idea of compensation or natural justice, it should in fairness be applied in a uniform way to any living author whose books are borrowed from libraries. But its use to encourage or protect native authors writing in the vernacular language demonstrates that things are not necessarily so simple. If PLR is recognized in law as a facet of copyright (as it is, for example, in the 1973 amendment to the copyright law of the German Federal Republic), it is subject to international copyright conventions; if not, countries are under no obligation to extend the right to authors who are nationals of, or even commonly resident in, another country. The law on this point is unclear. Among countries of the European Economic Community, moreover, the treaty of Rome protects certain rights regardless of nationality, and there are also conflicting legal opinions about its applicability to PLR. Schemes established without a statutory basis would be free of any such obligations, even if PLR were subject to international copyright conventions. Methods of giving effect to PLR by extending copyright law were studied by a government-appointed working party in the United Kingdom in 1972, but this method was not in fact adopted.⁴

The possibility of limiting PLR to authors within the home country could be an important financial consideration even in a country which did not need to protect its vernacular writers. This option, therefore, is likely to be widely practiced, perhaps with exceptions in the case of writers from countries which are able to offer reciprocal rights. Small countries which are heavily dependent on books by foreign authors would find a reciprocal arrangement of this kind a considerable financial burden. For this reason, Danish authors have shown interest in a possible arrangement in which books by foreign authors would be included in PLR schemes on a reciprocal basis, but their accumulated payments would be credited to the fund available for distribution to home authors. Such an arrangement, however, offers no benefits under a scheme where the total amount to be distributed is predetermined annually.

Librarians are accustomed to recognize that artists, photographers, cartographers, and other "creators" may fall within the genus "author" if they contribute significantly to the contents of a publication, and

there is no reason why they should be treated differently in regard to eligibility for PLR. Payment by means of royalties rather than a fee may provide a useful means of identifying eligible contributors in all categories.

Common sense suggests that PLR, like copyright, might be limited to the lifetime of the author, and perhaps a period of fifty years after his death. If PLR is based on an author's registration of his right in a title, it follows also that the author must be alive when the right is first claimed. The registration system might allow an author to transfer all or part of the benefits of PLR in a particular work to another person or institution during his lifetime, just as he can transfer royalty payments. He might wish to do this from motives of charity or benevolence, or for tax purposes. If PLR payment is to continue for a period after the author's death, it must be regarded as a property which can be bequeathed or inherited, and the author's heirs or assigns must also be enabled to transfer this property to another beneficiary during the period of its currency.

Eligible Publications

The principle of PLR could be applied to any objects which are repeatedly lent for use by different individuals. It has been applied particularly to books because of the notion that it should benefit not the manufacturer or the retailer, but the artistic creator of the work; a creator, moreover, whose only other financial benefit, in the form of royalties on copies sold, has been represented as often being inadequate. There is, therefore, a close analogy between PLR and the right of playwright or composer to a fee for the public performance of a play or musical composition. Books, moreover, are lent—as musical works are performed—on a sufficiently large scale to justify the setting up of collection procedures.

Individual books may be categorized as eligible or ineligible for PLR on grounds of either principle or practicability. The limitation of PLR to books written in the vernacular language, or to works of imaginative literature, would be on grounds of principle; limitation to works by single authors or not more than three joint authors, or to publications of not less than forty-eight pages, would be on grounds of practicability. The latter would be designed to reduce administrative costs and avoid the fragmentation of payments into small amounts.

Eligible Libraries and Users

The term *public lending right* has inevitably become associated with public lending libraries. This is not necessarily the extent of its applicability, since the use of books by a large number of readers, whether inside or outside the library premises, is a characteristic of libraries of all kinds. Moreover, vagueness as to the boundaries of library premises in some institutions makes the distinction between lending and reference use not only meaningless, but impossible.

The effect of extending the scope of PLR to include libraries other than public libraries is closely related to the method of funding. If the money to be paid to authors is to come from the users themselves—either individuals or institutions—or is to be paid on a predetermined rate per loan, then obviously the wider the net is cast, the greater will be the benefit to authors in general. But if the total sum of money to be paid in any one year is predetermined in a more arbitrary way, the only effect of extending the range of libraries from which use information is collected is to change the way in which this limited fund will be distributed. For example, the inclusion of academic and industrial libraries in addition to public libraries might be expected to increase payments to authors of standard and specialized nonfiction, and to reduce those to writers of fiction and children's books. In practice, the problems of data collection are greatly increased by attempting to extend PLR into these areas, and to create a stratified sample on the wider base would be extremely complex and expensive. For these reasons, public libraries provide a convenient and, arguably, a sufficient area for at least the initial establishment of a PLR scheme.

Although there is no logical reason to distinguish, for PLR purposes, between uses of books on library premises and elsewhere, the familiar problems of measuring the use of books on library premises are enough to discourage, and probably to prohibit, any attempt to apply PLR to reference use. The effect of this is likely to be different in different countries and in libraries of different kinds. Where home reading is the norm, books consulted on library premises in all but the largest libraries are likely to consist mainly of quick-reference volumes, most of them not by named authors and therefore not eligible for PLR. In total, therefore, the effect of applying PLR only to books used for home reading is unlikely to be significant.

Problems of Measurement and Recording

The application of PLR involves making payments to authors which are related in some way to the use of their books in libraries. Since large numbers of authors, books, loans, and libraries are involved, there is no simple way each library can be made directly responsible for transmitting money to authors, whatever funding system may be adopted. Two quite separate processes must therefore be accommodated within a PLR scheme: (1) the collection of information from eligible libraries about the use made of eligible books by eligible authors; and (2) the determination of the cash entitlement of each author, and payment of the money due. This second process requires a registry or clearinghouse, in which a register of eligible books and authors can be maintained and returns from libraries aggregated.

Measuring Library Use

Borrowing

Whatever the theoretical basis for PLR may be, the payments to which it gives rise must logically be related to the use of books in libraries, and the most relevant measurement of use is clearly the number of times each eligible book is borrowed during the review period (which here will be assumed to be a year). The majority of copies of each eligible book in a public library can probably be expected to be borrowed at least once a year, and many will be borrowed over and over again—perhaps up to twenty or thirty times, in the case of a popular novel. This method of measurement, although it produces a figure strictly related to use, requires the recording of a very large number of transactions (*eligible bookstock* \times *average issues per volume*). As already noted, this method cannot easily record the use of books on library premises, if that is considered to be desirable. For these reasons, two surrogate methods of measurement have sometimes been found attractive—"stock" and "acquisition" measurement methods.

Stock

Each eligible book in stock, whether on the shelves or on loan, might be counted only once each year. The total count by this means is much lower (*eligible bookstock* \times *1*), but the result is a measure of availability for use rather than of actual use. A seldom used book will score as highly as a very popular one, and this will tilt the scales in favor of the author of a specialized scholarly work and against the best seller. In effect, therefore, this method is rather more generous toward authors

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who cannot expect a large income from royalties, but for that reason it is a departure from any logical concept of PLR. Although there are considerable difficulties in recording by nonmechanical means the number of eligible books held in stock each year, these difficulties mostly disappear when stock records are computerized.

Acquisition

To count eligible books only once, at the time of their acquisition by the library, is a relatively simple task. If the size of the stock is assumed to remain constant, with a steady rate of acquisitions year by year, the number of transactions to be counted annually (*eligible book-stock* \div *average shelf-life per volume*) is by far the lowest of these options. Moreover, the task of recording at a limited number of acquisition points is likely to be less onerous than in either of the alternative methods, and further simplification may be possible if use can be made of the computerized records of library book suppliers. One seemingly attractive alternative would be to insert in all books a tear-out label carrying a machine-readable ISBN. Then, in the case of books purchased by libraries, the labels could be removed and sent in periodic batches to the clearinghouse. This possibility, however, has been found to be prohibitively expensive.⁵ Some libraries might instead be able to provide details of acquisitions as a by-product of their own computerized procedures. Whatever method of recording is adopted, however, the result is again a measure of availability, not of actual use; availability, moreover, is assumed to be the same for each book acquired, whereas even the stock-count system allows for the varying lengths of time the books are actually available on the shelves. A further disadvantage is that a newly introduced system on this basis cannot take into account books already in stock at the time of its inception. In spite of these shortcomings, this rough-and-ready system has the considerable merit that its administrative costs are relatively small, thus ensuring the maximum benefit to authors from any limited PLR fund.

Sampling

None of the methods of measurement described above need be applied to 100 percent of eligible libraries. The point has already been made that if PLR payments are to be made from a limited fund, the purpose of measurement is merely to determine the way in which this will be shared. This can be done by sampling, which reduces both administrative costs and inconvenience to libraries. Similarly, if pay-

ment is to be made at a predetermined rate per loan, averaging from a sample is likely to be acceptable. Full collection of data would be necessary only if money were to be collected from individual libraries or their members in proportion to their use of publications eligible for PLR.

If the pattern of use in public libraries (or any other category deemed eligible for PLR purposes) were consistent and predictable, sampling would be an easy matter, but this is clearly not so. Use fluctuates over time, and is affected by locality characteristics, individual preferences, size and scope of libraries, and buying policies of librarians. The selection of a stratified sample must reflect these differences, and its size must achieve a balance between a high degree of accuracy and low administrative costs.

An exercise carried out by the Department of Education and Science (DES) Technical Investigation Group in the United Kingdom classified 6235 public library service points in thirty-six "strata" according to geographical region, hours of opening, and type of authority. Seventy-two service points (a little over 1 percent of the total) were randomly selected, two from each stratum, and from these information was collected about the use of 140 books by a varied and carefully selected range of authors. The results indicated that with such a sample, an author whose correct payment should be £100 could expect that, over a period of years, two-thirds of his annual payments would be within 4 percent, and only one in twenty would be outside 8 percent, of the amount due; over a long enough period, these fluctuations could be expected to even out. On the other hand, variations in patterns of borrowing due to geographical factors could give a two-thirds chance of a bias exceeding 32 percent. This could be avoided by rotating the sample at predetermined intervals.⁶ In the United Kingdom scheme, administrative costs are to be kept down by adopting a sample of forty-five public library service points, changed every five years; but the pattern and extent of variation—and hence the required sample size—will be different in different countries.

The Issue-based Scheme Further Considered

The collection of data about borrowings of eligible publications from library service points involves two processes—the recording of borrowings, and the transmission of information to the clearinghouse or registrar. These processes can be carried out most conveniently using machine-readable records and a lightpen or other form of electronic

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reading device. Information which is to be usable by the registrar must be in a standard form, or capable of being converted to a standard form, probably involving the identification of each publication by its ISBN, or, in the case of pre-ISBN publications, by a standard pseudo-ISBN allocated by the registrar. In a library with computerized issue records but using other charging symbols, a conversion file to ISBNs may be required.

If a library included in the sample does not already use a computerized issue system, the most satisfactory solution will probably be to install simple electronic recording equipment for the period during which it forms part of the sample. (Although some choices are possible in devising a stratified sample, it would probably be an unreasonable distortion to select only computerized issue points.) The bookstock of such a library needs then to be given machine-readable ISBNs, and all other eligible books lent through it during the sample period need to be processed in the same way. Experiments in several libraries have suggested that a team of four could insert labels bearing machine-readable ISBNs at an average rate of 650 books per working day. In libraries where the normal book-issuing process is not computerized, the additional work involved in recording loans for PLR purposes by the use of light pens is likely to take about eight minutes per 100 books.⁷

Nonmechanical methods of data collection and transmission are likely to be more tedious and expensive, subject to error and open to possible abuse. The simplest would be the removal and forwarding of completed date-labels on which the numbers of issues were recorded. But these are not available in all issue systems, and in any case they contain information about use which librarians might wish to retain.

Strictly speaking, there is no need to record the use of books title-by-title for PLR purposes. Payment will be made to authors for the use in libraries of all the books for which they have claimed PLR, and differentiation will not usually be necessary. However, it is possible that an author may not choose to claim PLR on every one of his titles, or may in some cases allocate his right to someone else; there are dangers of confusion between authors with similar names if titles are not recorded; and there is likely to be some interest in the information about library use of specific titles which can become available as a result of data collection for PLR purposes. The DES Technical Investigation Group, having considered the alternatives, concluded that there was "likely to be a clear cost advantage in favour of using ISBNs and that they would also provide a more flexible system in enabling future changes to be made to the scheme."⁸

The Clearinghouse

Distribution of money to a large number of authors on the basis of information obtained from a large number of libraries involves many operations which are best carried out by a central clearinghouse or registry. Whether this is thought of as a society acting on behalf of its author members (like the Performing Right Society) or a disinterested agency concerned only with ensuring the fair and efficient operation of the scheme (like the administrative office envisaged in the United Kingdom PLR scheme)⁹ does not significantly affect its role. The duties might even be divided between two or more agencies if that seemed expedient. In one way or another, however, provision must be made for the following:

1. to receive and validate applications by eligible authors for PLR in respect to specific titles, to take note in appropriate cases of the author's instructions regarding the allocation of pecuniary benefits to other persons or groups, and to continue such a record from the date of registration until PLR lapses at the predetermined date (perhaps fifty years after the death of the author) or earlier if the current beneficiary so requests. In due course it will be necessary to weed out these records, partly perhaps by requiring authors or their beneficiaries to reregister after a period during which no payments have been payable;
2. to obtain periodically records of the use of books subject to PLR from the libraries participating in the scheme. Since the individual libraries will usually have no means of knowing which of their books are subject to PLR, they must be expected to supply records of use of all books in their stock, and from these the clearinghouse will have to extract those which relate to eligible books. The numbers of borrowings of each title from all participating libraries must then be aggregated and, if necessary, grossed-up from a sample or represented as a percentage of total eligible borrowings, depending upon the method by which payment will be made; and
3. to calculate at predetermined intervals the PLR fee earned by each title, to aggregate the amount due to each beneficiary, and to make payment.

The manipulation of data for these purposes must clearly be automated: relevant information about each eligible author or other beneficiary (each identified by a number) and title (represented by ISBNs) will be recorded in computer files. Information received from libraries will also usually be in machine-readable form, but if not (if, for example, it

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consists of date labels removed from books), it will be converted to machine-readable form on arrival at the clearinghouse. The processes of relating use records to titles, titles to beneficiaries, and beneficiaries to cumulated periodic payments are performed by a simple computer program.

The clearinghouse is also the natural home for the administration of the scheme itself. This includes establishing working relations with participating libraries, defraying their running costs, and if necessary, arranging for the sample of libraries to be changed periodically. Methods of recording loans have to be kept under review, and any equipment supplied specifically for that purpose serviced, moved as the sample changes, and in due course replaced.

Since public money and conflicting interests are involved, it goes without saying that accounts and methods must be fully open to scrutiny. Disputes are bound to arise, regarding both the administration of the scheme (the responsibility of the registrar) and its scope and funding (which are likely to be beyond his control). Policy on such disputable matters as the definition and treatment of joint and multiple authors therefore needs to be carefully defined and scrupulously adhered to. Studies in the United Kingdom have indicated that for all these purposes, a clearinghouse for a loan-based PLR scheme, using a sample of seventy-two library service points and handling 50,000 initial registrations by authors, might require a staff of thirty-five to forty people.¹⁰

Sources of Funds

There are three methods of funding a PLR scheme: (1) by a levy on the actual users (i.e., individual borrowers); (2) by a levy on the intermediary institutions (i.e., libraries); and (3) by a grant from a central source (e.g., the central government).

A levy on users is the most logical method, and the simplest in concept, but it is by far the most difficult and expensive to administer. There could, for example, be no question of sampling: book borrowers in every eligible library would have to pay their fee every time they borrowed an eligible book. The identification of eligible books in every eligible library would present more problems than the blanket collection of data about *all* books borrowed in a sample of libraries for later comparison with a list of eligible titles, which is possible with other methods. It would be possible to commute individual fees for a subscription or season ticket, merely to provide a fund for distribution on a use-sample basis, but this would be a departure from the principle of

PLR and would bear unfairly on readers with a taste for reading nineteenth-century novels or other ineligible works. There would be additional costs and administrative problems, too, in transferring money—as well as records of use—from each library to the central clearinghouse. However, the most serious objection to the method of direct payment by users is that it is bound to discourage some people from using books and to influence the reading patterns of others.

A levy on libraries, if calculated on a fairly “rough-and-ready” basis (related perhaps to total use of the library or its current expenditure on books), need present no great administrative problems. But an attempt to relate the levy to use of *eligible* books would be much more difficult. The method, however, is open to objection on much more serious grounds—namely, that any fee exacted from a library and charged to its budget is unlikely to be matched by additional income. Instead, it will have to be compensated for by reducing expenditures elsewhere, and this will often mean reducing expenditures on books.

A central government grant, although it removes from users the responsibility for payment, is in all other respects the simplest and least objectionable system: it has no unfortunate side effects, and collection of money from a large number of sources is avoided. It has already been noted that the method by which PLR is funded has a significant effect on other aspects of the scheme. If funding from a central source consists of a fixed total amount rather than a predetermined payment per loan, the scheme must be concerned with distributing this amount, regardless of the number of authors or the number of loans involved. In the other two methods, the size of the fund would increase in proportion to the number of borrowings recorded or the number of institutions participating in the scheme, and payment would most logically be made on the basis of a fixed amount per loan.

Payment Per Loan

The payment which might reasonably be made to an author whenever a book is borrowed from a library under a PLR scheme cannot be related with any precision to his likely income from royalties or to any other measure. If the scheme is financed by central government grant, the size of the grant—and hence of individual payments—will in practice be influenced by the authors’ view of what is reasonable, the government’s view of what is practicable, and ultimately, by public opinion as to what is fair. In the United Kingdom, where over 600 million borrowings from public libraries occur each year, each million pounds avail-

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able for distribution would provide rather less than 0.2p. (£0.002) for each borrowing, *if all books borrowed were subject to PLR*. In fact, many of the books borrowed would be ineligible for reasons already discussed, and no reliable estimate of an author's likely income per loan is available.

Once a book is deemed to be eligible for PLR, a standard rate of payment per loan would be the most obvious and simplest system to administer, and the most likely to be adopted. But other possibilities merit consideration. It may seem unjust that a pamphlet of some fifty pages or a slim light novel should earn the same PLR fee as a major work of scholarship of five hundred pages. The author's royalty is related to the cost of publishing his book, and it could be argued that PLR should be treated in the same way.

PLR, strictly interpreted, requires the distribution of payments to authors as nearly as possible in proportion to the use of their books in libraries. But such a pure application of the PLR philosophy is likely to prove administratively cumbersome and socially unacceptable. On the one hand, a great deal of the money available would be dissipated among the large number of authors whose few issues a year earned fees too small to justify the cost of their payment; on the other hand, the best-selling authors, already well rewarded by royalty payments, would reap a second harvest from the use of their books in libraries. There may therefore seem to be advantages in stipulating upper and lower limits of use, beyond which payments would not be made. An author who fell below the cutoff point in any year might be allowed to carry forward his recorded PLR loans until he reached the payment level in a subsequent year. The possibility that payments might be made to authors via their publishers was considered by the DES Technical Investigation Group, but was discounted because of the complications which would result.¹¹

PLR Costs Reviewed

To provide a sum of money annually for distribution among authors in recognition of the use of their books in libraries is administratively a simple matter. To provide a basis for distribution which is precisely related to the amount of use which each book receives is complex and costly. The cost of collecting use data can be reduced by compromising on accuracy. Economies can be effected by accepting statistics relating to purchases or stock instead of actual use, or by collecting data from a sample of libraries, or by a combination of the two. In distributing payments to authors, there can be no substitute for a

carefully programmed, fully computerized operation. Additional costs will be incurred if the income for the scheme is also to be collected on the basis of use, whether by individual users or by institutions.

The United Kingdom PLR program will consist of payments from a centrally provided fund, distributed to an undetermined number of authors on the basis of issue data collected from a sample of forty-five libraries (1 percent of the total of eligible service points). The total administrative costs of this scheme, including payments to libraries to cover the cost of data collection, are expected to be £280,000 per annum, or 13 percent of an initial fund of £2.2 million per annum. The cost of administration will not, of course, increase in step with any future enlargement of the fund.

The Introduction of a PLR Scheme

There are differing views as to the desirability of PLR in general and the practicability of any particular scheme. Some of the skeptics or outright opponents may be among those whose active cooperation is needed if a scheme is to work successfully. Preparation must therefore be thorough and systematic, and must include a considerable public relations program to ensure the maximum degree of acceptance, interest and enthusiastic participation. Preliminary discussions should cover the principles underlying the scheme, reasons for preferring the methods actually proposed, and the detailed operations which will need to be carried out. The clearinghouse must be established early in the set-up period and all staff concerned in the scheme, both in the clearinghouse and in participating libraries, must be trained in their tasks. Authors themselves must be satisfied that the scheme is the most satisfactory that can be achieved, and—at a second stage—must be given adequate opportunity to register their publications. Some physical preparations will also be necessary in the participating libraries. All this takes time:

On the basis of information at present available and in the light of experience elsewhere in introducing novel and complicated administrative procedures it seems reasonable to assume that the time that will elapse between the determination of the scheme to be used and the start of the recording period will be about 2½ years for a loan based scheme. This may be reduced to two years if outside contractors are employed, for example, to help with the design of the scheme. In a purchase based scheme where library authorities would not need to label existing bookstocks it might be possible to shorten these timetables by up to six and three months respectively.¹²

In the United Kingdom, legislation authorizing PLR was passed in March 1979. The proposed scheme was outlined in a consultative document¹³ issued toward the end of that year, and it is likely that the scheme will come into operation in 1982.

Possible Consequences of PLR

A PLR scheme is capable of being weighted to provide benefits wherever they may be thought desirable: the use of such a system to assist authors writing in the vernacular language is a case in point. But the straightforward scheme, however welcome it may be to authors in principle, is open to the criticism that it provides appreciable benefits only to those who least need them. Authors whose books are extensively used in libraries are usually the ones who also have a considerable sale in bookshops. They may well find not only that their royalty income is supplemented by PLR, but also that issues of their books from libraries continue in some cases at a sufficiently high level to produce appreciable PLR income for some years after royalties have dwindled to a trickle. A large number of other writers can expect PLR to provide a modest addition to their incomes, but far more will find themselves below the cutoff point, where no benefits accrue.

Fears also have been expressed that possible benefits to authors might be eroded, directly or indirectly, by the claims of publishers. The interest of publishers in PLR has already been noted, and the existence of this additional source of income for authors might at some future date influence negotiations on royalty payments, or cause publishers to require a proportion of PLR income in their contracts with authors.

If PLR payments were to become a significant factor in authors' incomes, and were calculated at a flat rate per volume regardless of cost or length, several consequences might result. The more influential authors, sure of their public and able to negotiate with publishers from a position of strength, may prefer to write short books rather than long ones, press for their longer works to be issued in several volumes, and resist the publication of "omnibus" volumes. Authors who consider themselves inadequately recompensed for the use of their books might even wish to withhold them from libraries, as A.P. Herbert once did as part of his campaign for the introduction of PLR.

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